

Listing of Claims:

The following listing of claims is provided for the convenience of the Examiner.
No amendments to the claims are made in this paper.

1. (Original) A method for coordinating an Internet-based financial transaction between an Internet merchant and a customer, the method comprising:
 - receiving, with a payment network, a first information packet from the Internet merchant, the first information packet comprising a credential assigned to the customer and transaction information specifying at least a cost of the Internet-based financial transaction;
 - determining from the credential, with the payment network, account information that identifies a financial account maintained by the customer at a financial institution and authorization information that allows debit access to the identified financial account;
 - generating, with the payment network, a second information packet comprising the transaction information, the account information, and the authorization information; and
 - transmitting, with the payment network, the second information packet to the financial institution with a request to perform a debit transaction from the identified financial account for the specified cost of the Internet-based financial transaction.

2. (Original) The method recited in claim 1 further comprising:
 - receiving, with the payment network, a response from the financial institution indicating approval or denial of the debit transaction; and
 - transmitting, with the payment network, an authorization code to the Internet merchant indicating approval or denial of the Internet-based financial transaction in accordance with the response received from the financial institution.

3. (Original) The method recited in claim 2 further comprising:
performing, with the payment network, a risk analysis of the Internet-based financial transaction; and
determining, with the payment network, whether to provide a guarantee of the Internet-based transaction to the Internet merchant based on the risk analysis,
wherein the authorization code further reflects whether the guarantee is provided.
4. (Original) The method recited in claim 1 wherein the second information packet is transmitted to the financial institution over an automated clearing house (“ACH”) network.
5. (Original) The method recited in claim 1 wherein the second information packet is transmitted to the financial institution over a debit system.
6. (Original) The method recited in claim 1 wherein the second information packet is transmitted directly to the financial institution from the payment network.
7. (Original) The method recited in claim 1 wherein:
the account information comprises a primary account number (“PAN”) for the identified financial account; and
the authorization information comprises a personal identification number (“PIN”) assigned to the customer for accessing the identified financial account.
8. (Original) The method recited in claim 1 further comprising crediting, with the payment network, a loyalty program for the customer in response to execution of the Internet-based financial transaction.

9. (Original) The method recited in claim 1 wherein:
the credential comprises an electronic file having encrypted content received from
the customer; and
determining account information comprises decrypting the encrypted content.

10. (Original) A method for coordinating an Internet-based financial transaction between an Internet merchant and a customer, the method comprising:
receiving, with a payment network, a first information packet comprising an electronic file having encrypted content and transaction information specifying at least a cost of the Internet-based financial transaction;
decrypting the electronic file, with the payment network, to recover a primary account number (“PAN”) that identifies a financial account maintained by the customer at a financial institution and to recover a personal identification number (“PIN”) assigned to the customer for accessing the identified financial account;
generating, with the payment network, a second information packet comprising the transaction information, the PAN, and the PIN;
transmitting, with the payment network, the second information packet to the financial institution with a request to perform a debit transaction from the identified financial account for the specified cost of the Internet-based financial transaction;
receiving, with the payment network, a response from the financial institution indicating approval or denial of the debit transaction;
determining, with the payment network, whether to provide a guarantee of the Internet-based transaction to the Internet merchant;
determining, with the payment network, whether to credit a loyalty program for the customer; and
transmitting, with the payment network, an authorization code indicating approval or denial of the Internet-based transaction.

11. (Original) The method recited in claim 10 wherein:
the first information packet includes an identification of the Internet merchant;
and

determining whether to provide the guarantee of the Internet-based transaction comprises determining whether the Internet merchant is one of an identified list of Internet merchants who request guarantees of all Internet-based financial transactions.

12. (Original) The method recited in claim 10 wherein determining whether to provide the guarantee of the Internet-based transaction comprises determining whether the transaction information is consistent with a predefined set of parameters.

13. (Original) The method recited in claim 10 wherein the first information packet further comprises a request from the Internet merchant for the guarantee of the Internet-based transaction.

14. (Original) A payment network comprising:
a communications device;
a processor;
a storage device; and
a memory coupled with the processor, the memory comprising a computer-readable medium having a computer-readable program embodied therein for directing operation of the payment network, the computer-readable program including:

instructions for receiving, with the communications device, a first information packet from the Internet merchant, the first information packet comprising a credential assigned to the customer and transaction information specifying at least a cost of the Internet-based financial transaction;

instructions for determining from the credential, with the processor, account information that identifies a financial account maintained by the customer at a financial

institution and authorization information that allows debit access to the identified financial account;

instructions for generating, with the processor, a second information packet comprising the transaction information, the account information, and the authorization information; and

instructions for transmitting, with the communications device, the second information packet to the financial institution with a request to perform a debit transaction from the identified financial account for the specified cost of the Internet-based financial transaction.

15. (Original) The payment network recited in claim 14 wherein the computer-readable program further includes:

instructions for receiving, with the communications device, a response from the financial institution indicating approval or denial of the debit transaction; and

instructions for transmitting, with the communications device, an authorization code to the Internet merchant indicating approval or denial of the Internet-based financial transaction in accordance with the response received from the financial institution.

16. (Original) The payment network recited in claim 15 wherein the computer-readable program further includes:

instructions for performing, with the processor, a risk analysis of the Internet-based financial transaction; and

instructions for determining, with the processor, whether to provide a guarantee of the Internet-based transaction to the Internet merchant based on the risk analysis,

wherein the authorization code further reflects whether the guarantee is provided.

17. (Original) The payment network recited in claim 16 wherein:
the first information packet includes an identification of the Internet merchant;
and

the instructions for determining whether to provide the guarantee of the Internet-based transaction comprise instructions for determining whether the Internet merchant is one of an identified list stored on the storage device of Internet merchants who request guarantees of all Internet-based financial transactions.

18. (Original) The payment network recited in claim 16 wherein the instructions for determining whether to provide the guarantee of the Internet-based transaction comprise instructions for determining whether the transaction information is consistent with a predefined set of parameters.

19. (Original) The payment network recited in claim 16 wherein the first information packet further comprises a request from the Internet merchant for the guarantee of the Internet-based transaction.

20. (Original) The payment network recited in claim 14 wherein:
the communications system is coupled with an automated clearing house (“ACH”) network; and

the instructions for transmitting the second information packet to the financial institution comprise instructions for transmitting the second information packet over the ACH network.

21. (Original) The payment network recited in claim 14 wherein the instructions for transmitting the second information packet to the financial institution comprise instructions for transmitting the second information packet over a debit system.

22. (Original) The payment network recited in claim 14 wherein the instructions for transmitting the second information packet comprise instructions for transmitting the second information packet directly to the financial institution from the communications device.

23. (Original) The payment network recited in claim 14 wherein:
the account information comprises a primary account number (“PAN”) for the identified financial account; and

the authorization information comprises a personal identification number (“PIN”) assigned to the customer for accessing the identified financial account.

24. (Original) The payment network recited in claim 14 wherein the computer-readable program further comprises instructions for crediting, with the processor, a loyalty program for the customer in response to execution of the Internet-based financial transaction.

25. (Original) The payment network recited in claim 14 wherein:
the credential comprises an electronic file having encrypted content received from the customer; and

the instructions for determining account information comprise instructions for decrypting the encrypted content.